



**For immediate release
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**DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION TO
SOLICIT INTEREST IN THE REHABILITATION AND REUSE OF SIX
HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

*DCR's Historic Curatorship Program begins active marketing campaign
to find private citizens to rehabilitate historic gems*

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has begun actively seeking interest in the agency's Historic Curatorship program, through which outside parties rehabilitate, reuse, and maintain a historic property in return for credit toward a long-term lease.

Six unique historic properties are currently available for curatorship. They are the Smith Farmhouse in Borderland State Park in Easton, the Coachman's Complex in Maudslay State Park in Newburyport, the Harlow Farmhouse in Ellisville Harbor State Park in Plymouth, the Lamson House in Bradley Palmer State Park in Topsfield, the former Headquarters House in Beartown State Forest in Monterey, and Bascom Lodge in Mt. Greylock State Reservation in Adams. These properties are all sited in some of the Commonwealth's most beautiful natural settings.

This is DCR's first active marketing effort in five years for the Historic Curatorship Program, which was established in 1994, and it marks the renewal of the program, for which a full-time manager was hired last December. So far, nine properties have been rehabilitated under the Curatorship Program in locations across the state, from the mountains of Berkshire County to the urban streets of Dorchester, from the banks of the Merrimack River in Lowell to the forests of Foxboro. Current uses for those properties include single family residences, artist lofts, a nonprofit group, and a for-profit events and overnight facility. Historic Curatorships are a win-win situation for the curator/tenants, as well as for DCR and the citizens of the Commonwealth, who benefit from the improved park and forest facilities.

"The Historic Curatorship Program demonstrates an innovative and entrepreneurial approach to preserving the history and culture of our park system," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr.

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DCR's Historic Curatorship Program is one of only a handful in the country and is among the most successful. Within the thousands of acres of forests and parks in the Commonwealth are a number of historically significant buildings with enormous potential for reuse. Without direct public funding, however, many of these mansions, houses, and cottages have fallen prey to the elements and vandalism. The Historic Curatorship Program was established to address the problem of deferred maintenance through the formation of public-private partnerships. Since the program's inception, nearly \$5 million of private funds have been leveraged toward the restoration of some of the Commonwealth's most significant historic properties.

The program requires that the reuses of these significant properties be compatible with the surrounding community while enhancing the visitor's experience of the public park. Curators are chosen based on a number of criteria, including the overall quality of their proposal, their experience in restoration and historic preservation, their financial resources, and the public benefits and environmentally sustainable building practices they will incorporate.

The New York Times and WBZ-TV (Ch. 4) both featured DCR's Curatorship Program in recent months. The New York Times described participation in the program as "the pleasure of bringing an abandoned landmark back to life, freedom from mortgage payments, and the chance to live in the kind of home that would otherwise be out of reach."

The first step in the new marketing campaign is releasing what is called a Request for Expressions of Interest, to gauge public interest in the program. Based on the results of this solicitation, DCR will issue a Request for Responses, which describes the submission requirements and provides detailed information on the property, including an assessment of its current condition and cost estimates to rehabilitate it. Interested parties then can submit a proposal for review by DCR. Successful proposals outline a viable reuse concept, public benefit, rehabilitation approach, and implementation schedule, and demonstrate relevant experience and sound financial qualifications for tenancy.

More details DCR's Historic Curatorship Program, as well as electronic copies of the Request for Expressions of Interest, are located on the DCR website at mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/curator/index.htm. For hard copies of these documents, or more information on the Historic Curatorship Program, send an e-mail to or call 617-626-1361.

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